the formulation of a programme of generic promotion designed to serve the interests of the tea producers would facilitate the efforts to work out a Commodity Agreement on Tea.

Smuggling of Gold

143. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that gold smuggling has doubled during this year as compared to last year leading to rise in inflation;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for the increase in gold smuggling; and

(c) what steps are being taken to arrest the activities of smugglers from across the borders of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) and (b) Since smuggling is a clandestine activtity, it is not feasible to estimate the quantum of gold that is being smuggled into the country. However, the quantum of gold seized during the last few calender years as shown in table below has shown an upward trend. This need not necessarily indicate a spurt in the smuggling of gold and could be due to the intensified drive against smuggling:—

Year	Golod seized (in Kgs.)
1986	2174
1987	2255
1988 . . . . (upto September)	3809 (provisional)

The main reasons for the continuance of smuggling of gold into the country are:—

(i) High domestic demand due to social customs;

(ii) Demand for hoarding purposes as a security;

(iii) Negligible indigenous production and supplies; and

(iv) Profitability due to wide differential between lower international prices and higher domestic prices.

(c) The anti-smuggling drive throughout the country has been intensified. The anti-smuggling machinery along the land borders and the coastline has been geared up. Sophisticated equipments like X-ray baggage machines, metal detectors and night vision binoculars are being increasingly utilised.

Export or non-basmati rice to East European Countries by Calcutta Firms

144. SHRI DIPEN GHOSH:
SHRI M.A. BABY:
SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY:
SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain Calcutta firms, among others, have been awarded permits for export of non-basmati rice to East European countries; and

(b) if so, what are the names of these firms and the criteria on the basis of which they were awarded such permits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a)